

Organization: - National Museums of Kenya (NMK)

Project Location: East African region: Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda

Web Address: www.museums.or.ke

Title of Grant: "Establishing the National Museums of Kenya as a Regional Center for Excellence in Biodiversity Informatics"

Grant Amount: \$74,800

Principal Investigator: Helida A. Oyieke & Stella Simiyu

Organization Background:

The National Museums of Kenya (NMK) dates back to 1910 when the institution was established in Nairobi by the then East Africa and Uganda Natural History Society, currently the East African Natural History Society. At the time, the group consisted mainly of colonial settlers and naturalists who needed a place to keep and preserve their collections of various specimens. The Museum is now a state corporation established by an Act of Parliament, the National Museums and Heritage Act, 2006 no. 6 of 2006. NMK is a multi-disciplinary institution whose role is to collect, preserve, study, document and present Kenya's past and present cultural and natural heritage. This is for the purposes of enhancing knowledge, appreciation, respect and sustainable utilization of these resources for the benefit of Kenya and the world, for now and posterity.

Grant Description:

The Foundation funded in 2009 a Lake Victoria Biodiversity Informatics LAVIBI initiative which is a partnership of four institutions of the East African region: Kenya Marine Research Institute-KMFRI (Lead institution), National Museums of Kenya (NMK), Tanzania Fisheries Research Institute (TAFIRI) and National Fisheries Resources Research Institute (NaFIRRI-Uganda), coordinated by Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC).

In order to build on the gains made by the JRS supported LAVIBI effort and the Botanical Gardens Conservation International, US (BGCI) East African plant conservation strategy regional project, to consolidate other biodiversity work through the various national and regional initiatives already in, and to create opportunities for further investment in African biodiversity the current project was conceived which will focus on several elements:

1. Build Human Capacity:
 - a. Build infrastructure, technical and human capacity.

- b. Develop a Kenya Biodiversity Informatics Facility (KENBIF) working with partners such as the Kenya National Council of Science & Technology, the Inter American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN) in Panama, the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) in Denmark, the Asociacion Instituto Nacional de Biodiversidad (INBio) in Costa Rica, the Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad (CONABIO) in Mexico, the Foundation for the Revitalization of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT) in India, and ETI BioInformatics (ETI) in The Netherlands, among others.
 - c. Develop capacity to build user friendly tools and products such as online key guides, educational resources, etc.
 2. Respond to External Needs:
 - a. Define, implement and evaluate targeted training and capacity building programs.
 - b. Support policy makers and other stakeholders to strengthen the use of biodiversity informatics.
 - c. Disseminate and build capacity for use of the Center's tools and products.
 3. Strengthen Partnerships:
 - a. Develop partnerships to enhance collaboration with strategic international, national and regional partners.
 - b. Work with likeminded initiatives to consolidate effort and develop a platform for efficient use of resources and capacities.
 - c. Work with partners to mobilize additional resources to ensure sustainability.

Specifically, the Foundation grant will help lead to these ends by:

1. Procuring support from international experts such as INBio, CONABIO, FRLHT, GBIF, IABIN, ETI, and others.
2. Undertaking an online consultation to gain input from international partners.
3. Establishing four task forces to undertake consultations and develop components of a project proposal that will lead to the creation of a KENBIF biodiversity informatics center at the National Museums of Kenya.